



# Wildland Fires and Agriculture

## Background

Wildfires affect America's farms and ranches, damaging and destroying homes, barns, agriculture production facilities, crops and livestock. If a wildfire threatens your farm or ranch, always remember that human life must be the first priority; property comes second. Keep in mind, however, that when firefighters arrive, they may ask which to save first, second, third, etc, so determine beforehand the order of importance: livestock, machinery, or feed.

Wildfires depend on four factors: available fuel, lack of moisture, terrain, and an ignition source. There is ample available fuel in Washington forests and lands. During very dry years, fuels that dry can ignite easily. Both natural forces and human causes produce wildfires. Lightning in combination with an accumulation of fuels on the forest floor and fields coupled very dry conditions are the most likely natural cause of a wildland fires in Washington State. Wildland fires attributed to human behavior include recreational fires, arson, or burning debris.



Wenatchee Complex Fire, WA - Courtesy of USFS

## Evacuations

If you are asked to evacuate from your farm or ranch, your livestock and machinery may have to be left behind. WSDA asks evacuees to contact their local Emergency Operations Center (EOC) with the numbers and types of animals that were left behind at your farm or ranch when the fire started.

## Injured or Stray Animals

It is advised that if you come upon an injured domestic animal, if it is yours, contact your local veterinarian, or if not yours, to call your local Emergency Operations Center to be referred to the animal response group. If an individual encounters a stray animal, if it is feasible and safe for you to do, please retain custody of the animal, until WSDA can provide an identification check. If you are unable to support a stray at this time, please call your local Emergency Operations Center and let them know the location of the stray animal. If you discover an injured wild animal, please call the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife or your local EOC.

## Animal Carcasses

As for mortality cases, the state Department of Agriculture would like to gather the number and type of deceased animals for investigative purposes. Disposal and burial information can be found by contacting 211, your local health department, or your local Emergency Operations Center. In an effort to reduce non-emergency calls to the Emergency Operations Center and to provide victims of the fire the most accurate information, "211" phone lines provide citizens with specific contact information for agencies providing health and human services, animal services, recovery, housing and food assistance, as well as donations. Persons needing these types of services, or information from these agencies should dial "211".

## Disaster assistance programs for farmers, ranchers

Farmers and ranchers should contact their county offices of the [USDA's Farm Service Agency](#) (FSA) and their insurance companies to report damages. Please contact the Farm Service Agency office in your county to inquire about assistance from USDA. Deadlines for federal programs vary, so FSA encourages producers to contact federal program staff as soon as damage becomes apparent.

Useful links include:

- Statewide list of [USDA-FSA offices](#)
- Washington State Department of Agriculture Emergency Preparedness [website](#).
- Your local Emergency Management Office can be found at:  
[http://www.emd.wa.gov/myn/myn\\_contact\\_info.shtml](http://www.emd.wa.gov/myn/myn_contact_info.shtml)
- Your local Public Health Jurisdiction office:  
<http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1200/Directory.pdf>
- Washington Military Department: <http://www.emd.wa.gov>

### Washington State Department of Agriculture

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(360) 725-5509

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Barker Canyon Complex Fire, WA - Courtesy of Frank Ayers